

STATE OF MARYLAND

**MARYLAND DEPARTMENT OF THE ENVIRONMENT**

**Shari T. Wilson, Secretary**

**BILL NO:** House Bill 1368

**COMMITTEE:** Environmental Matters

**POSITION:** Support with Amendments

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**TITLE: Environment – State and Private Wetlands - Improvements**

**BILL ANALYSIS:**

House Bill 1368 (HB 1368) provides additional protection to the State's tidal wetland resources by eliminating the ability of riparian property owners to construct piers over tidal marsh.

**POSITION AND RATIONALE:**

The Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE or Department) supports HB 1368 with amendments. The Bill reinforces the State's Tidal Wetlands protection program by enhancing the public policy objectives established by the Maryland General Assembly in 1970 – the preservation of tidal wetlands and the prevention of their despoliation and destruction. While the Department believes that additional restrictions on pier construction are required to provide additional protections to sensitive habitat, these restrictions should be developed in concert with a variety of stakeholders, including riparian property owners, recreational interests, representative of the marine contracting industry, environmental advocates and various resource protection agencies. Consequently, the Department recommends that the Bill be amended to establish a task force to study riparian rights relating to access to navigable water and the construction of piers in Maryland.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION,**

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